



CITY AND COUNTY OF  
SAN FRANCISCO

TAXICAB COMMISSION  
MAYOR WILLIE L. BROWN JR.

LYNETTE SWEET, PRESIDENT  
PAUL GILLESPIE, VICE PRESIDENT  
SERGIO ALUNAN, COMMISSIONER  
PATRICIA BRESLIN, COMMISSIONER  
R. BOWMAN LEONG, COMMISSIONER  
MARY McGUIRE, COMMISSIONER  
RICHARD WIENER, COMMISSIONER

NAOMI LITTLE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# *ANNUAL REPORT*

## *January 1, 2001 – December 31, 2001*

5/S



San Francisco Public Library

Information Center  
San Francisco Public Library  
Larkin Street, 5th Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94102

REFERENCE BOOK

*Taken from the Library*

DOCUMENTS DEPT.

MAY 2 2002

SAN FRANCISCO  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

D

REF  
388.3423  
Sa52a  
2001

1540 Market Street, Suite 160, San Francisco, CA 94102  
Telephone: (415) 554-3940, Fax: (415) 552-5996  
E-mail: [sftaxicommission@prodigy.net](mailto:sftaxicommission@prodigy.net), Web site: [www.sfgov.org/taxicommission](http://www.sfgov.org/taxicommission)



CITY AND COUNTY OF  
SAN FRANCISCO



TAXICAB COMMISSION  
MAYOR WILLIE L. BROWN JR.

LYNETTE SWEET, PRESIDENT  
PAUL GILLESPIE, VICE PRESIDENT  
SERGIO ALUNAN, COMMISSIONER  
PATRICIA BRESLIN, COMMISSIONER  
R. BOWMAN LEONG, COMMISSIONER  
MARY McGUIRE, COMMISSIONER  
RICHARD WIENER, COMMISSIONER

NAOMI LITTLE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# *ANNUAL REPORT*

## *January 1, 2001 – December 31, 2001*

DOCUMENTS DEPT.

MAY 2 2002

SAN FRANCISCO  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

## TAXICAB COMMISSION ANNUAL STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

### A. JURISDICTION

Taxicab medallions were private assets prior to 1978. Individuals and corporations could purchase a medallion for market rate, which was approximately \$20,000. In 1978, the voters of San Francisco passed Proposition K, which drastically changed the taxicab industry. The medallions then became a public asset.

### PROPOSITION K

Proposition K is incorporated into the Municipal Administrative Code Appendix 6. The premise behind Proposition K is all “taxicab permits and other vehicle for hire permits issued by the City and County of San Francisco are the property of the people.” The non-transferable permits are issued to persons (not corporations) who declare an intention to “actively and personally” drive for “at least four hours during any 24-hour period on at least 75% of the year.” The Taxicab Commission interpreted this requirement as 156 – four-hour shifts. However, individuals and corporations possessing medallions prior to Proposition K (i.e. “Pre-K” medallions) are exempted from the driving requirement.

Permit holders<sup>1</sup> are required to keep their taxicabs in continual operation. A three-layer system exists in San Francisco. When permit holders are not driving, the permit holder leases his or her medallion to non-medallion drivers through color scheme holders.<sup>2</sup> The permit holder is paid a lease fee by the color scheme, and in turn, the color scheme charges the taxicab driver<sup>3</sup> a gate fee for the use of the vehicle for the day. All meter fare income goes directly to the driver.

Currently, there are 1,381 medallions issued in San Francisco – 1,306 regular permits and 75 ramped taxicab permits (i.e. wheelchair accessible). A Public Convenience and Necessity Hearing determine the number of permits. The Taxicab Commission must determine whether or not the public is “adequately or properly served” when deciding to issue a permit.

### PROPOSITION D

In 1998, the voters of San Francisco passed Proposition D, which is now a part of the San Francisco Charter § 4.133. As of March 1, 1999, the Taxicab Commission

---

<sup>1</sup> “Permit holders” are also referred as “medallion holders.” A medallion holder is any permittee licensed by the City to own and operate a taxicab.

<sup>2</sup> “Color scheme holders” are permittees licensed by the City to operate a taxicab color scheme. The phrase “Color Scheme Holder,” “Taxicab Company” and “Taxi Company” may be used interchangeably.

<sup>3</sup> “Taxicab Drivers” are non-medallion holders. A taxicab driver is a permittee licensed by the City to drive on behalf of the medallion holder.



succeeded all powers and responsibilities relating to taxicabs and other motor vehicles for hire. Criminal enforcement remains vested with the Police Commission.

The Taxicab Commission recovers all costs associated with the operation and administration of the Taxicab Commission Department from permit, license and other fees charged to permit holders, applicants and other persons.

The Taxicab Commission consists of seven two-year term members appointed by the Mayor. Representation on the Commission consists of the following:

- Senior and disabled community;
- An individual who does not hold a taxicab medallion;
- Taxicab company (either a medallion holder or a company representative);
- Hospitality industry;
- Labor community;
- Neighborhoods;
- General Public not affiliated with any of the other enumerated categories.

## B. AUTHORITIES

### Taxicab Commission:

The Taxicab Commission Department will assume all permitting responsibilities, including drivers, permit holders, ramp taxicabs, PCN applications, color scheme changes, lost medallions, metal medallions, color scheme renewals and applications, and dispatch services. When a person files an application, the Taxicab Commission Office will initiate a background investigation. This entails investigating the validity of the application and ensuring that the various qualifications of the applicant are accurate.

In assuming all powers and responsibilities relating to taxicabs and other motor vehicles for hire (other than criminal enforcement) the Taxicab Commission will take over all administrative audits such as the Proposition K, Dispatch and Color Scheme audits. The Taxicab Commission will also have the responsibility for handling customer service complaints.

### SFPD Taxicab Detail:

The Police Department will continue with criminal enforcement. This includes street enforcement, local or state law violation complaints, and lost property recovery. Street enforcement entails monitoring taxicabs on the street to determine whether the driver is carrying his or her A-card (i.e. driver's permit card), identification badge and to ensure the taxicab is in compliance with the California Vehicle Code, the Municipal Police Code and the Taxicab Commission's Rules and Regulations. The Taxicab Detail will provide greater police enforcement to help deter out-of town taxicabs and

limousines, which unlawfully solicit passengers in San Francisco. In addition, special operations, such as stings, will uncover refusals to take passengers to specified locations.

#### C. PURPOSE

The "Mission" of the San Francisco Taxicab Commission is to insure the provision of prompt, safe, honest, efficient, and courteous taxi service to the residents and visitors of San Francisco; to enact and enforce just and equitable rules concerning drivers, medallion holders and companies; and to provide an open forum for debate and discussion of all issues concerning public vehicle for hire services in San Francisco.

#### D. GOALS

The Taxicab Commission's first directive to the Executive Director was to reorganize the duties and responsibilities related to the San Francisco Taxicab Industry. This goal will be achieved by reorganizing the budget during the FY 2002-2003 budget cycle. The Taxicab Enforcement Fund currently housed under the Police Department's budget will be transferred to the independent department of the Taxicab Commission. Appropriate funds will be work ordered to the Police Department for criminal enforcement. The Executive Director will draft a MOU with the Police Department to work out duties.

The Taxicab Commission is working closely with the Department of Human Resources with job descriptions and classification of the new staff. The Police Department will help in training the new staff.

## ANNUAL REPORT TAXICAB COMMISSION 2001 ACHIEVEMENTS

### A. TAXICAB COMMISSION PROCEDURES

Over this past year, one of the primary focuses of the Taxicab Commission was to streamline its procedures and policies. The Commissioners focused on numerous issues including the permit process, the quality of dispatch services, procedures at color schemes, and the age and maintenance of taxicab vehicles. In 2001, the Taxicab Commission issued 47 regular permits (medallions), 17 ramped taxicab permits and 826 driver passenger vehicle permits (A-cards). See Addendum A.

#### 1. Permit Process

The Commission established procedures for protesting the prospective issuance of a taxicab/ramped taxicab permit and for the timing for driver color scheme changes. After the Commission staff receives an application that is complete, notice will be on the first agenda thereafter. The notice will (a) identify the applicant, (b) state the notice is not an agenda item, (c) state the application will be reviewed at the next Commission Meeting and (d) state procedures for protesting the application.

#### 2. Waiting Lists

The Commission addressed the procedures surrounding the permit waiting lists. Two lists currently exist – the regular permit list and the ramped taxi permit list. The industry was unfamiliar with the Commission's time-waiver policy. When an applicant is number one on the waiting list, but has failed to complete the requirements of becoming a permit holder (i.e. background check, physical health and driving requirement), that applicant can ask for a time-waiver in order to complete the requirements. Once the requirements are completed, the applicant resumes his or her place on the waiting list. In addition, the Commission established a policy to reinstating persons to the ramped taxi list due to clerical error or lack of notice.

#### 3. Color Schemes

On average, San Francisco taxicabs drive 100,000 miles in approximately one year and three months. For this reason the Taxicab Commission Rule § 5.B.3 limits the age of the taxicab vehicle to three years. Many cab companies had to purchase new vehicles this year. Since there was an excessive order of Ford's Crown Victoria sedans, the taxicab vehicle of choice, there was a backlog in filling cab companies orders. The Commission allowed 4<sup>th</sup> year taxicabs to be used as a spare taxicabs to help mitigate the backlog.

#### 4. Drivers



For better business and safety reasons, the Commission reviewed dispatch services in San Francisco. Dispatch service is essential for customer service. Servicing radios calls is a tool for drivers to make money in light of the hard economic times of 2001. The Commission required all Color Scheme Holders to post amounts charged for gate fees in a prominent and public location for each day of the week.

## B. PARATRANSIT PROGRAM

The Taxicab Commission worked closely with MUNI's Paratransit Program. In January 2001, Marc Soto, the Paratransit Broker, addressed the Commission to give an update regarding full-compliance with Board of Supervisor Ordinance #98-1039. This Ordinance requires all taxicab companies to participate in the Paratransit Program. The excellent working relationship between the Paratransit Broker and the Taxicab Commission successfully saw full compliance of the Board of Supervisors' mandate.

The longevity and viability of the ramped taxicab vehicle provided a problem for the taxicab industry. San Francisco's topography and terrain is extremely tough on for-hire vehicles, especially the ramped taxicabs. Quality of service to the disabled community suffers due to excessive maintenance costs. The lifting and hydraulic devices used for wheelchairs often break.

The Commission is committed to a successful Paratransit Program. For these reasons and in collaboration with the Paratransit Broker, the Commission sought solutions to the ramped taxicab vehicle maintenance problems. The Commission suspended and amended certain rules and regulations and searched for ramp taxicab vehicle design alternatives.

In order to keep the ramped taxicab program running, the Taxicab Commission allowed ramped taxi medallions to be placed in spare taxicab sedans, while the ramped taxicabs were in maintenance. In addition, MUNI experienced roadblocks in procuring 24 new ramped taxicabs to replace the old ramped taxicabs required to go out-of-service due to age. The Commission granted an extension of the life of the old ramped taxicabs, to allow MUNI to procure the new vehicles.

In finding a viable design alternative for a more efficient ramped taxicab vehicles, the Commission invited Liberty Motors to present its Ford Winstar rear entry ramped taxicab. According to the presentation, the rear entry vehicle provides a much sturdier frame, a manually operated ramp, and heavier suspension. Today, four Ford Winstar vehicles are in service in San Francisco and are being evaluated. Thus far, the results are favorable.

## C. TAXICAB SERVICE IN SAN FRANCISCO

This year, the Presidio Trust and the Port Authority initiated dialogue and discussion before the Taxicab Commission to establish a working relationship with the



Commission and taxicab companies. Taxicab service is integral in providing access to San Francisco's beautiful treasures.

In January 2001, Richard Tiles, from the Presidio Trust, addressed the Commission. Previously, the military discouraged taxicabs in the Presidio. Hence, many drivers were unfamiliar with this area of San Francisco. The Presidio Trust, a non-profit organization that regulates the non-coastal areas of the Presidio, wanted to encourage taxicab service. There are 2,000 (+) employee and 2,300(+) residents on the Presidio with a demand for taxicab services. In addition, the Golden Gate Club, Log Cabin, Golf Course and Trust Building often require taxicab service. The Presidio Trust provided a map of the major entrances and thoroughfares of the Presidio to encourage drivers to service this area.

In May 2001, Gerald Roybal, from the Port Authority, presented a report regarding the passenger service at the Port. In 2001, The Port Authority expected 41 cruise calls, estimating 77,000 passengers visiting San Francisco. Pier 35 is where the ships embark. Groundside services, such as taxicabs, at Pier 35 are essential to keep passengers coming to San Francisco. As a result of this meeting, the Port Authority sends notices to all cab companies and the Convention & Visitor's Bureau newsletter as to when cruise ships are embarking at Pier 35.

#### D. GUIDELINES FOR THE BOARD OF PERMIT APPEALS

In following the wishes of the Board of Permit Appeals, the Taxicab Commission began to establish procedures for disciplinary cases. For example, the Taxicab Commission established a time period for filing appeals from permit decisions with the Board of Appeals. When the Commission grants a permit, the 15-day appeal period to file an appeal begins on the date of the hearing at which the Commission decided to grant the permit. When the Commission denies a permit, or suspends or revokes a permit, the 15-day appeal period is based on the date of the Notice of Decision sent to the applicant who was denied the permit.

#### E. RELATIONS WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKING & TRAFFIC ("DPT")

This past year, taxicab drivers have received numerous "drive-away" tickets. That is, when the driver receives the parking ticket in the mail instead of on the windshield. The traffic control situation during special events and rush hour has been a logistical challenge. At Pacific Bell Ballpark, patrons desperately want taxicabs. However, due to traffic control problems, if the taxicab drivers pull over on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, he or she will receive a ticket in the mail. During the Giants Baseball season, the taxicab stand at the Ballpark was filled with private cars and limousines, and all areas around the Ballpark are tow-away zones. In addition, many drivers receive "drive-away" tickets at 555 California and 50- 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. The Commission is working diligently with DPT to establish a policy prohibiting the ticketing of taxicab drivers involved in the expeditious loading or unloading of a passenger.

Taxicab Commissioners met with DPT to improve the taxicab stands at the Ball Park and 555 California. Next year servicing these two prime locations where residents, tourists and businesspersons need taxicabs should be successful. Moreover, the Commission began a dialogue with DPT to establish neighborhood taxicab stands.

#### F. LIMOUSINE AND OUT-OF-TOWN TAXICAB ENFORCEMENT

For the past few years, there has been an explosion of limousine operators unlawfully soliciting passengers and out-of-town taxicabs operating without a permit in San Francisco. The volume and repetitiveness of the continuing offenses are reaching epidemic proportions. Limousines and out-of-town taxicabs are filling up taxicab stands, which prohibit authorized San Francisco taxicabs, the ability to utilize these stands.

The Taxicab Detail regularly enforces violations involving out-of-town taxicabs and limousines. In addition to a major enforcement operation in March 2001, twice a month, a two-officer detail performs an eight-hour enforcement. In response to the taxicab industry's pleas, the Taxicab Commission invited the California Public Utilities Commission Transportation Enforcement Section, the division that regulates limousines to a Meeting. The Commission wanted to establish an open dialogue.

Currently, a limousine or out-of-town taxicab in violation of the Municipal Police Code pays a bail fee of \$76. A common practice among offenders is to pay the bail amounts charged and maintain their behaviors. The Commission began the process of increasing the infraction penalties so that the bail payments will no longer simply be a cost of "doing business."

#### G. SAFETY HEARING

On December 7, 2001, the Taxicab Commission staff held its annual safety hearing as required by Municipal Police Code § 1147.3(a). This year the Taxicab Commission made it a point to hold its safety hearing apart from the regular Taxicab Commission Meetings. The Commission appointed the Executive Director to conduct the safety hearing.

As required by MPC § 1147.3(b), the Taxicab Detail presented a report on taxicab crime statistics and taxicab vehicle accident statistics for the past two years. Unfortunately, one homicide was committed against a taxicab driver during this period. Approximately 50 robberies and carjackings were committed. There were 14 battery and assaults and three threats over the past two years committed against taxicab drivers. As result of this report, the Taxicab Commission staff recommended safety cameras in all taxicabs in San Francisco.

A variety of safety topics were discussed at the hearing. It was recommended the dispatch services' standardized emergency procedures be reviewed. Drivers' training, safety shields, safety cameras, the operation of two-ray radios and OSHA training were discussed at the safety hearing. Today, preventative measure regarding how drivers can

protect themselves are on the Taxicab Commission's web page at [www.sfgov.org/taxicommission](http://www.sfgov.org/taxicommission).

## H. PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY HEARING

On December 11, 2001, the Taxicab Commission held its annual Public Convenience and Necessity Hearing. Over fifty people testified. The Commission decided that if 500 new taxicabs were issued at that time, an undue hardship on taxicab drivers would occur. The economy in 2001 is weaker than the economy on October 24, 2000, the date of the previous Public Convenience and Necessity Hearing. Since the tragic events of September 11<sup>th</sup> and the downturn in the economy, the demand for taxicab trips temporarily lessened. For these reasons, the Commission voted five to two that the October 24, 2000 decision to propose 500 new medallions be revisited by the Taxicab Commissioners no earlier than six months or as economic conditions warrant.

## STAFFING & BUDGET

On October 1, 2001, Naomi M. Little was hired to be the Executive Director of the San Francisco Taxicab Commission. Beginning in December, the Commission Office was staffed with Permit Clerk Stephanie Malouf. The San Francisco Taxicab Detail consists of Captain Thomas O'Neill, Lieutenant Bruce Lorin, Sergeant Vince Simpson, Inspector Farrell Suslow, Officer Cynthia Kulstad, Officer Paul Makaveckas, and Officer John Nevin. The Taxicab Detail Permit Clerks include Susan Horn and Vinnie Lew.

The year 2001 brought changes to the Taxicab Commission. Original Commissioner Vincent Agbayani resigned on February 13, 2001. Marianne Costello, President of the Commission and original member resigned on March 13, 2001. The following represents the Commissioners at the end of 2001.

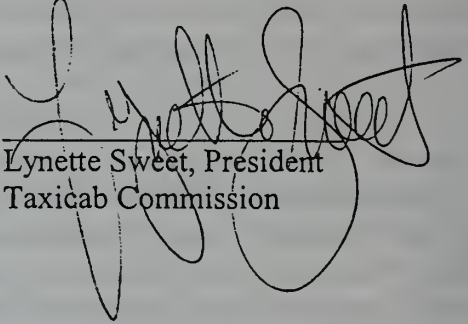
COMMISSIONER	CONSTITUENCY	DATE OF APPOINTMENT
Lynette Sweet, President	Neighborhood Representative	September 8, 2000; Elected President March 25, 2001
Paul Gillespie, Vice President	Taxicab Driver (non-medallion holder)	April 14, 2000 (Second Term); Elected Vice President March 25, 2001
Patricia Breslin	Hospitality Industry	May 11, 2001
Rachialle Franklin	Senior and Disabled Community	March 1, 2000 (Second Term)
R. Bowman Leong	At-Large	May 11, 2001
Mary McGuire	Labor Community	March 9, 2001 (Second Term)
Richard Wiener	Taxicab Company Representative	March 1, 2001 (Second Term)



## BUDGET

Year	Budget
FY 99-00	\$ 793,000
FY 00-01	\$1,013,000
FY 01-02	\$1,125,000

Respectfully Submitted,



Lynette Sweet, President  
Taxicab Commission



TAXICAB COMMISSION  
2001 PERMITS

DATE	MEDALLION PERMITS ISSUED		COLOR SCHEME CHANGES		DRIVER PUBLIC PASSENGER VEHICLE PERMITS ISSUED	HEARING FOR REVOCATIONS			NEW COLOR SCHEME	SURRENDERED COLOR SCHEME	WRAP TAXI	APPLICATIONS DENIED
	REGULAR	RAMP	REGULAR	RAMP		DRIVER	MEDALLION	CONTINUED				
1/9/01	28 *		56		48							1
1/23/01	1		1		77							
2/13/01			3		38	3						
2/27/01			3	1	50	1		1		1		
3/13/01	2	3	1		44			1				
3/27/01			1					1				
4/10/01	21	6	2		64							
4/24/01	2	2			42		2					
5/8/01	1		1		49	2	2	1			2	
5/22/01					43			2				
6/12/01	6	2	2	2	38	1		1	1			
6/26/01			5	1	40			1				
7/10/01			1		22							
7/24/01	4	1	1			2						
8/14/01	1	1	8	1	66	2		1				1
8/28/01	4	1	6	1	34			1				
9/25/01	1		2	1	27	1						
10/9/01	1	1	6		47							
10/23/01	1		2		18	408					10	
10/31/01			2									
11/13/01			1		28							
11/27/01	2		2		28	1						
12/11/01					23			1				
TOTALS	47	17	106	7	826	421	4	11	1	1	12	2

\* Final 1/5 of 1999 PC1 approval of 100 new medallions

## ADDENDUM B

Type of Permit	Filing Fee	Lic. Renewal Fee
	(Pd to SFPD)	(Pd to Tax Collector)
New Color Scheme		
1-5 Medallions	\$500.00	\$500.00
5-15 Medallions	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
16-49 Medallions	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
50+ Medallions	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
Color Scheme Change	\$125.00	
Lost Medallion	\$150.00	
Metallic Medallion	\$25.00	
PC & N (Includes Ad Fee)	\$227.00	
Public Passenger Vehicle Driver	\$65.00	\$40.00
Fingerprinting Fee (\$10 City, \$32 State)	\$42.00	
Ramped Taxicab	\$325.00	\$175.00
Taxicab	\$450.00	\$550.00
Para-transit Discount (\$220 credit)		\$330.00
CNG Vehicle Discount (50% credit)		\$275.00
Permit Amendment	\$61.00	
Taxicab Radio Dispatch Service	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00



